

Cortana

by CaptainImpaler

Category: Halo

Genre: Romance, Tragedy

Language: English

Characters: Cortana, Master Chief/John-117

Status: Completed

Published: 2013-05-20 07:51:51

Updated: 2013-05-20 07:51:51

Packaged: 2016-04-26 23:22:33

Rating: K+

Chapters: 3

Words: 2,697

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Defeating the Didact, and Cortana's disappearance through the Master Chief's thoughts.

1. Chapter 1

****A/N:** I don't own Halo, but I own the interpretive head canon. That's about it. Everything else is from the dialogue and cutscenes in Halo 4. Hope you enjoy!**

John's hand was burning, but he kept holding on. Five fingers clenched the precipice of the light bridge with enough force to crack his bones. With only one hand weakly holding him, The Master Chief's body swung out to the side, as his eyes were full of the vision of some dark swirling matter that loomed below him. "_So much has been sacrificed, and I absolutely will not let her down..._" he spoke inwardly, prodding his muscles to keep moving.

John paused for a moment, confused with his own thoughts. "_I won't let humanity down_" he revised. He swung his other arm toward the edge of the bridge and the momentum allowed his hand to capture the rounded surface. His muscles were hardly working, but he pushed on. Forcing his body to inch toward the top surface of the light bridge, he caught sight of the Didact, shackled down by Cortana's multiple rampant holograms.

The nuke that desperately needed to be detonated was far out the Master Chief's reach, so he was forced to improvise. But he seemed to be quite good at that. The cogs in his brain began to work, and before he could consciously send any commands to his muscles to carry out an order, his body had flung itself onto the surface and had begun racing forward. He felt a Promethean grenade clutched in his hand that he didn't remember retrieving. As the Master Chief shoved the object at the figure on the floor, he was suddenly overcome.

It hadn't worked.

He must've missed somehowâ€¦ John was suddenly yanked into the air by the forerunner's immense telepathic power. He struggled, but of course it was inane. But he continued to fight, like he always would. Nothing was a lost cause as long as there was one fool left to fight for it. Two fools, in this caseâ€¦ He thought briefly of Cortana.

A loud sound then drags the Chief brokenly back to reality as quickly as he had left it. John's eyes suddenly snapped to the forerunner's, and it registered in his mind, like a brick smashing into his brain. His grenade had made it to its destination. The explosion echoes throughout the area, and John treasures the noise, briefly forgetting about every sound he's ever heard; only recognizing the feeling of a lost hope now recovered.

The Didact's eyes lost their light and direction seemingly all at once. The forerunner clutched blankly at his mutilated chest and tumbled over the edge of the light bridge, lost to a seemingly endless oblivion. John was released from the force of power that shackled him to air, but was reminded that the mission remained still incomplete. After he watched the forerunner disappear, he threw himself in the direction of the nuke.

This ship needed to be destroyed before any more harm could come to earth. That was the mission. As long as John 117 was alive and breathing, he would complete the mission. That was how he was programmed. Two ton weights must've been strapped to his feet, because he was moving in slow motion. The Master Chief's muscles would falter, and the thought of failing would terrify him enough to keep moving. When his hands finally landed on the explosive object, he wasted no time.

Without another thought, he slammed the top of the nuke, investing all of the energy and life he had left.

2. Chapter 2

****A/N: Again, I don't own Halo. This is from the cutscenes and dialogue! But everything else is mine! Enjoy!****

He expected to feel some sort of pain, but there was nothing. Everything was completely blank. He could feel nothing, see nothing, hear nothingâ€¦ But John still had his thoughts.

Although he should've felt empty, it was seemingly the opposite. His being, if there even was one, was filled with some sort of emotion he couldn't quite comprehend. He had done the right thing. For all of humanityâ€¦

For her.

The Master Chief's heart swelled in his chest at the glorious thought. Suddenly, his mind screeched to a halt. If he were dead, he certainly shouldn't be able to feel anything.

A fraction of a second later, every tangible pain wracked every corner of the Spartan's body, and he became aware that he was still very much alive. Air tore through his raw lungs, and he could feel several ribs pop in and out of place at the forceful breath. John

realized he could open his eyes, and when he did, a blinding light that seemed to explode from nowhere streamed into his open vision. No other noise registered in the chief's ears but the sound of his own ragged breathing. He also recognized that he was crouching down, which seemed impossible since he couldn't feel his legs at the moment.

After contemplating the situation and reorganizing for the next move, he became eerily aware of something that was not there. An immediate and uncharacteristic pool of panic twisted in his gut and began eating at the vulnerable and broken parts of his body. Where was the voice that always helped him assess the situation for a Plan B?

Where was Cortana?

He didn't realize at first that he was searching for her voice to ask him if he were still alive, or what their next plan of action would be. He was expecting to hear her calculating, and explaining as soon as his ears recognized sound. But there was only silence.

"Cortana." He rose up. He looked around. Silence. "Cortana, do you read?" he insisted, keeping most of the panic out of his voice. "Cortana, come in!"

He turned around suddenly, when his eyes fell upon her. Relief washed through him like warm water, defrosting his frozen heart. She was walking toward him, contemplating him. John was mesmerized at first, and thankful that his helmet kept her from seeing how he was gawking at her. She was fully human sized. He took a few hesitant steps toward her, extending an arm. He wanted to reach out and touch her.

"Howâ€¦?"

"Oh, I'm the strangest thing you've seen all day?" she smirked. The Spartan retracted the earlier thought about his helmet. John wished she could see the smile that spread across his features, ear to ear. But her face quickly fell. As did his.

"But if we're hereâ€¦"

"It worked," she said as if she were speaking to herself. She smiled. "You did it... Just like you always doâ€¦" There was a hint of admiration to her voice mixed with a brokenness he had never heard from his partner. He glanced around and noticed where they were. He started formulating an escape plan.

"So how do we get out of here?" There was a few moment's silence before he looked at her.

"I'm not coming with you this time." He stared at her blankly. The words didn't register in his mind. He mulled them over in his head, searching for their meaning.

"What?" It was more of a statement than a question. After everything they've accomplished together, she says she's not coming with him this time?

"Most of me is down thereâ€¦" She admitted quietly. Her head gestured

to somewhere below them. "I only held enough back to get you off the ship" she continued weakly.

"No, that's not- We go together." Desperation was creeping back into him.

"It's already done" Cortana whispers faintly. The breath was knocked out of him. Nothing made sense. Thoughts were jumbled words made of symbols, noise, syntax, and codes that lacked any absolute definition. He could only understand that he was a Spartan and SHE was HIS partner. They worked together. She must have been shaken from the previously violent chain of events.

"I am NOT leaving you here." Perhaps a more forceful statement would shake her out of whatever state she was in.

"John" It was nothing more than a frail whisper, a desperate sound with a power to make his heart crack beneath his impenetrable armor. His name on her lips made the Spartan shiver. Her voice seems to caress his name with a color and beauty that was unfamiliar to his soldier's brain. It struck a hidden nerve inside of him, igniting a fire. He wished that she would be the only one to speak his name for the rest of his torturous life.

She completed the gap between them, and her hand reached out for him. He held his breath, although she could not hear it hitch. Her hand made contact with his shoulder, and the place where their bodies touched sparked a blue glow. Never had he wished so desperately to be free of the clinking metal that constantly trapped him within himself. It no longer protected him, but just held his rusted and collapsing frame together.

Although he could not feel her, he pretended. He pretended it felt wonderful. She let out a shaky breath while the Spartan still held his in his chest. To the naked eye, he looked unmoved.

Her fingers lightly trailed down his armor perhaps an inch, and he heard her almost cry. "I've waited so long to do that" He quietly let out his breath. When he glanced at Cortana, her eyes were closed. He suddenly felt convicted. This was his fault. If he hadn't left her unattended for years, if only he had known that the rampancy would tear her apart, he could've done something different. He _would've_ done something different.

"It was my job to take care of you."

"We were supposed to take care of each other," she responded with a quiet, sad smile. "And we did," she added, her voice rising as if she were close to tears. Every mission, she was there. Guiding him, helping him, understanding. Although John 117 was supposed to be one of the miracles for mankind, he was a machine. He had been stripped of his humanity long ago as a child. But now, as he stood facing his partner, he felt more human than he had ever remembered. He was lost for words. He felt

He felt vulnerable.

"Cortana" he said more quietly. "Please." What else could he do but beg? He was beginning to realize that there was something more between them, which was hard to register because he wasn't made for

this. But the thought pushed its way forcefully through his brain, commanding that he listen. John was sure that this wasn't in Halsey's plan when she decided to make him a Spartan. He was made to be only a soldier. But an unintended factor seemed to bypass that intended outcome.

Cortana's mouth opened, as if she were about to say something. But her hand slipped away from the Master Chief's shoulder, leaving his body alone in its cage of armor. She began to back away. John's heart was pulsing in his chest, and he bit back the desire to run after her. Surely, if she could touch him without reaching through him, he could take her in his arms, and keep her from running.

"Wait." The pathetic statement was all the Spartan could manage as he watched Cortana slipping away from him. Suddenly, John wanted to say something. He was programmed to be courageous and intentional, but the two characteristics were yearning inside of him to serve a purpose that had nothing to do with an assigned mission. He tried to slow down everything, his thoughts, losing Cortana... Everything. His tongue sticks to the roof of his mouth, but his lips part to form the three words that seemed like the most familiar of thoughts, ideas, and concrete abstractions that he had never known.

"Welcome home, John!" Before he could let out a breath, she had interrupted. That was the last thing he heard Cortana say to him before she disappeared into nothingness. He only stood there, staring at her until she disappeared, and even staring for a while at the spot where she used to be. The barrier began to disintegrate around him, but he failed to notice it. He was still frozen; frozen with so much human inside of him that his whole body locked up. Insufferable moments passed before he looked around to see pieces of the Didact's ship crashing around him. The last thing John registered was the UNSC Infinity opening up the ship to let the drifting and lost Spartan into its hollowed embrace.

3. Chapter 3

I don't own Halo, but gosh I wish I did. Again, all dialogue is from the game, and I still stuck as closely as I could to the cutscenes!

The Infinity was drifting silently, the earth in perfect view. The Spartan stared out the large windows at the beautiful planet, swirling with whites, and greens, and blues. To think that if the Didact had destroyed this planet, the universe would be robbed of something truly beautiful. He was taken out of his quiet contemplation by a familiar voice.

"Mind if I join you?" The Master Chief raised his head, and turned around quickly as if he were surprised.

"Of course not, sir," the Chief replied, his low voice rumbling.

"At ease, Chief. Feels kinda odd for you to call me sir." Commander Lasky joined John at the window.

"Beautiful, isn't she?" The commander asked as his eyes roved out to the planet before them. "I don't get to see her often enough." There

was a silence. Perhaps Lasky was waiting for the Chief to respond?

"I grew up in New Harmony," he continued, "Attended Corbulo Military Academy." He looked at John. "Never saw Earth in person 'till I was an adult, butâ€¦ I still think of her as home." There was more silence. Lasky shifted a little uncomfortably, while the Spartan remained where he was. "You don't talk much, do you?" The Commander's question was answered with John's continued silence. They both stayed quiet, but the Master Chief could feel Lasky pressing to say something.

"Chief, I won't pretend to know how you feel." John then realized the Commander's true intentions of being with him. But he said nothing, only listened.

"I've lost people I care about, butâ€¦. Never anything like you're going through." The Chief was stoic.

"Our duty," John responded, "as soldiers, is to protect humanity. Whatever the cost."

"You say that like humanity and soldiers are different things." The Spartan mulled this over for a moment before the Commander continued. "I mean, soldiers aren't machinesâ€¦" John's head snapped to Lasky, hearing something he had heard before, and was desperate to make sure he knew who exactly it was coming from. "They're just peopleâ€¦" The Commander finished.

"I'll let you have the deck to yourself," Lasky commented quietly, when he realized he would gain no response from the soldier. As the Commander left John with his thoughts, The Chief said out loud: "She said that to me once. About being a machine."

Cortana.

Thoughts of her welled into his brain, chiseling away pieces of his heart that he did not know existed. Cortana always knew what to do. She always had a planâ€¦ Which meant HE always had to have a plan. And the plan was to search. Search for her. He didn't know if it was his brain plunging deeper into denial, refusing to accept the fact that she was gone, or if he honestly believed that she never left, but he would search the ends of the universe for her. He would accept no other partner, or stop until he found her.

Because John 117 was in love with Cortana, and he would spend his life searching to tell her, or die trying.

End
file.